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THE HOPES OF ISRAEL

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

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May 1966

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to examine in detail Israel's hopes for the future as they find expression in the Latter Prophets. More specifically, this thesis seeks to investigate the precise forms in which and by which Israel expressed her hopes. It attempts to isolate and to examine the many varying pictures which Israel used to portray her hopes and, to the degree that the material at hand permits, to bring these varying pictures together into something of an organized whole.

This process of viewing the biblical text on its own terms is the basic one of the biblical theologian. It is on the basis of investigations such as these that the systematic theologian is enabled to perform his task of relating the content of the biblical message to his own age in the terms of that age. Systematic theology is therefore the terminus ad quem of Bible study, the final step and not the point from which we begin. Periodically it is necessary to leave behind the systematic formulations of the past, with their terminology designed for a particular day, and, stripping away the accretions of the past, return again to the source of all our teaching to make certain that our exegesis and biblical theology is standing in the proper relationship to our systematic formulations.

The concept of eschatology is, of course, foremost in importance in both the Old and the New Testaments. In the final analysis it is only this element which gives lasting significance to the biblical message. If God will not intervene in history to deliver his people

and overthrow his enemies--if there is no hope for the future--then we are of all men most miserable, and the message of both testaments is meaningless. Too, it is precisely in this area, that is, that of Israel's future hope, that the nexus between the two testaments must be found.

The particular manner in which Israel expressed her hope is important also for other reasons, and it was upon the basis of these that this study was undertaken here. The significance of this matter first became apparent to me while studying some of the apocalyptic and intertestamental literature. There one frequently meets pictures of future bliss which not only stagger the imagination, but also lead one to ask where the roots of such conceptions must lie. One of the descriptive passages of the temporary messianic reign of II Baruch may serve as an illustration:

And Behemoth shall be revealed from his place and Leviathan shall ascend from the sea, those two great monsters which I created on the fifth day of creation, and shall have kept until that time; and then they shall be for food for all that are left. The earth also shall yield its fruit ten thousandfold and on each (?) vine there shall be a thousand branches, and each branch shall produce a thousand clusters, and each cluster produce a thousand grapes, and each grape produce a cor of wine. And those who have hungered shall rejoice: moreover, also, they shall behold marvels every day. For winds shall go forth from before Me to bring every morning the fragrance of aromatic fruits, and at the close of the day clouds distilling the dew of health. And it shall come to pass at that self-same time that the treasury of manna shall again descend from on high, and they will eat of it in those years, because these are they who have come to the consummation of time (II Baruch 29:4-8).

Similar imagery is also found in the New Testament, for example, in Revelation 21-22, with the result that our study should throw light on such pictures there also. Since such descriptions are, on the other

hand, rare in the Pentateuch and Former Prophets,<sup>1</sup> the logical place to begin a study of their antecedents was the Latter Prophets, and that is the form which this thesis has taken, and the particular goal to which it is directed.

While not of particular concern in this thesis, the manner in which Israel expressed its future hope, both the pictures used and their source, are also of primary concern in understanding and describing the manner in which inspiration took place in the Old Testament writers.

The use of the term eschatology has been purposely avoided in the title of this paper, since it has many meanings to many people. Lindblom states, for example, that if eschatology is a doctrine of the end of the world and of the history of mankind, then there is no eschatology at all in the Old Testament prophets.<sup>2</sup> Von Rad takes as his "touchstone" for the use of the term eschatological that characteristic feature of the prophet's message which he labels "its actuality, its expectation of something soon to happen."<sup>3</sup> Others attempt to determine whether a passage refers to "this age" or to an "age to come," but von Rad's criticism is to the point:

To do this, however, is tantamount to applying a concept of time to the prophets' teaching of which they themselves were quite

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<sup>1</sup>A common exception might be passages which refer to the covenant blessings, such as Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

<sup>2</sup>J. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962, p. 360.

<sup>3</sup>Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), II, 115.

unaware. If, as I have already suggested, this concept of time simply did not exist for the prophets, it is perfectly possible to say that the event which they foretell is a final one even if we, without our different presuppositions, would describe it as still "within history" . . . . The relevant passages do not, in my view, call for a distinction to be drawn between Jahweh's action within history and his action at the end of it, and there is consequently no need to confine the term "eschatological" to the latter.<sup>4</sup>

In a word, then, it is impossible to separate the "this worldly" and the "other worldly" into neat categories, and it is a matter of debate as to when Israel itself began to make such a distinction. "Future hope" is therefore used in this paper to embrace what is commonly referred to as eschatological in the widest sense. The same difficulty arises in attempting to distinguish between those passages which refer to an earthly human ruler and those which are "messianic" in the narrowest sense of the term; therefore these two have been treated together.

I have avoided any attempt to arrive at a consistent and harmonious description where this did not seem to be the obvious and clear meaning of a passage, since to try to harmonize such passages would be to defeat the purpose of the paper itself. Therefore different sections of the paper may appear to elaborate upon, modify, or even contradict one another. It is particularly of this material, it would seem, that the student attempting to gain an understanding of the source of the pictures used to describe Israel's hopes would wish to take account.

There are, of course, many ways from which one can approach a

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

subject as broad as this, depending upon the particular goal in mind. Since my object has been to try to grasp the richness and variety of Israel's hope in its totality, and not as it is found in a particular age or in a particular writer, I have taken no account of isagogical matters such as date and authorship, which would hopelessly complicate such a study. The central point of this study is not who spoke the words of hope, nor when they were spoken, but rather what was spoken, and, more specifically, the form, et cetera, in which the hope finds expression.

In conducting this study, the primary texts were used almost exclusively in chapters two and three to avoid as much as possible approaching the texts with preconceived categories in mind. Secondary sources have been used extensively in chapters one and four, as well as in the revision of chapters two and three.

No particular effort has been made to cite every passage dealing with a particular topic when this served no obvious purpose. On the other hand, an effort has been made to accurately reflect the comparative frequency with which the Old Testament treats a particular topic.

Since there are numerous ways in which one could approach a topic as broad as that we have set for our investigation, it would be well before beginning to survey briefly the methods adopted by some of the more popular and influential works treating this area of Israelite eschatology. To simplify the matter considerably, we might view these under four differing approaches.

First, there is a considerable number of works which attempt to



describe Israel's future hopes in a completely systematic and chronological manner. All of the conceptions of the various prophets are arranged together in the order in which they are to occur at the end time. This methodology is best illustrated by Schürer,<sup>5</sup> but is also that followed by many of the older theologians, and to some degree by some of the more recent ones, such as Heinisch<sup>6</sup> and Köhler.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, there is a large number of works which treats each prophet, or at least a group of prophets, as a unit, and summarizes the message of each prophet or group of prophets. Excellent recent examples of such works are those of von Rad,<sup>8</sup> Lindblom,<sup>9</sup> and, to a lesser degree, Mowinckel.<sup>10</sup>

Thirdly, a sizeable group of men have chosen to portray Israel's hopes more or less topically. Gressman, for example, treats of the return of paradise and the return of the Mosaic period under the Golden Age, and the return of David under the topic of the political

<sup>5</sup>Emil Schürer, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, translated by Sophia Taylor and Rev. Peter Christie (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), II, 154-187.

<sup>6</sup>Paul Heinisch, Theology of the Old Testament, English edition by William Herdt (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1950).

<sup>7</sup>Ludwig Köhler, Old Testament Theology, translated by A. S. Todd (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 227-238.

<sup>8</sup>Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, translated by D. M. G. Stalker (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), Vol. II.

<sup>9</sup>J. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962).

<sup>10</sup>Sigmund Mowinckel, He That Cometh, translated by G. W. Anderson (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), pp. 143-149, 267-279.

messiah.<sup>11</sup> Volz,<sup>12</sup> Gross,<sup>13</sup> and, to a degree, Jacob, have made use of this same scheme.

Fourthly, there is, you might say, a remnant which to a degree defies categorization, but which represents in fact a blending of the first three methodologies. There is something, for example, of the systematic presentation of Schürer, of the concern for sources as with Gressman and Volz, and at the same time a realization that Israelite eschatology did not remain unchanged over the centuries. Many times these studies show a high degree of originality, such as that of Eichrodt;<sup>14</sup> they are frequently dominated by a particular concern of the writer, as in Knight<sup>15</sup> and Vriezen,<sup>16</sup> where the approach from the New Testament vantage point is a prime methodological consideration. A more restrained use of the material marks the presentations of

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<sup>11</sup>Hugo Gressman, Der Messias (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 1929), pp. 149-192, 232-272.

<sup>12</sup>Paul Volz, Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter (Second edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1934), pp. 381-419.

<sup>13</sup>Heinrich Gross, Die Idee des Ewigen und allgemeinen Weltfriedens im Alten Orient und im alten Testament, 7 Band in Trierer Theologische Studien (Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1956), pp. 60-96, 111-152.

<sup>14</sup>Walter Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, translated by J. S. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), I, 473-490.

<sup>15</sup>George A. E. Knight, A Christian Theology of the Old Testament (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959).

<sup>16</sup>Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), pp. 353-354.

Rowley,<sup>17</sup> Baab,<sup>18</sup> and others who, while presenting to some degree a unified picture of the Israelite hope for the future do so with the realization that strict uniformity is not to be found. It might be mentioned in this connection that the approach of Baab most closely approximates that of this paper, although the framework of this paper was arrived at independently. To my knowledge, no other writer so closely relates Israel's hopes in Yahweh with the attributes of God, in particular his mercy, and his work in forgiveness and covenant, although relatively little is said about the latter.

We begin our study, then, with Israel's hope in Yahweh, what Baab calls the "driving force" of salvation.<sup>19</sup> After surveying Israel's conception of its God as a God of mercy and wrath, we see how this mercy shows itself in covenant and forgiveness, and how covenant and forgiveness results in a holy people blessed in every way by its merciful God. Lastly, we shall summarize our findings, and voice our conclusions as to the forms which Israel's hopes took, and the sources from which these were derived.

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<sup>17</sup>H. H. Rowley, The Faith of Israel. (London: SCM Press, 1956).

<sup>18</sup>Otto J. Baab, The Theology of the Old Testament. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1949).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

## CHAPTER II

### ISRAEL'S HOPE IN YAHWEH

In the chapters which follow it should not be forgotten that Israel's hopes for the future can never be divorced from her faith in Yahweh. It was because of her great faith in Yahweh as a merciful God who loved and cared for an unworthy and rebellious people that Israel could have any hope for the future.

The words of Vriezen are well chosen:

The basis of all expectations of salvation is faith in Yahweh, i.e. He who is, faith in the actual presence of the Holy God, who is also the God of salvation. With Procksch we may say: "Israel's faith in God embraces the future." This promise with respect to the future lies in the actuality of Yahweh and in His covenant-relationship with His people. . . . This security remains the basis of all further relationships, even of the most contradictory hopes.<sup>1</sup>

The same idea is expressed most succinctly by H. H. Rowley: "The Golden Age is none other than the kingdom of God, and without God it cannot be."<sup>2</sup> Similar references could be multiplied.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to say, however, that whether the reference to the fact is explicit or not, it is always Yahweh who acts on Israel's behalf: it is Yahweh who forgives sins; it is Yahweh who grants peace, security, prosperity, and

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<sup>1</sup>Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 355.

<sup>2</sup>H. H. Rowley, The Unity of the Bible (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), p. 83.

<sup>3</sup>Compare, e.g., A. B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. 366, 370; J. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 412.

so forth. The central point of this thesis, however, is the "what" rather than the "who."<sup>4</sup>

### Yahweh, A God of Wrath and Mercy

The clearest statements found in the Old Testament describing what we might today call the "personality" of God are those of the classical covenant confession:

For I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.<sup>5</sup>

This same position is also found in the prophets. Yahweh shows his steadfast love to thousands, but visits the guilt of the fathers upon their children (Jer. 32:18). Yahweh is a God of both wrath and mercy. Isaiah does not even stop short of saying that it is God himself who is the author of both light and darkness, of weal and woe (Is. 45:7).

God's wrath is certainly something which cannot be taken lightly:

The Lord is a jealous God and avenging, the Lord is avenging and wrathful; the Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and of great might, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty (Nah. 1:2-3).

God has been merciful, but his people have continued to rebel, so he will tear down his vineyard (Is. 5:5-6). Although he wants to redeem them, they lie (Hos. 7:3). He will punish them and deliver them into

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<sup>4</sup>Supra, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup>Ex. 20:5-6; cf. Ex. 34:6-7; Deut. 5:9-10; 7:9-10.

the hands of their iniquities (Is. 65:1-7). He becomes angry with his people, he takes away his peace, his steadfast love, his mercy, and his compassion (Is. 47:6; Jer. 16:5; Hos. 13:14). He will never forget their deeds. He has set his eye against them for evil; he will be like a lion and destroy them; he will never pass by them again (Amos 8:8; 9:4; Jer. 44:27; Hos. 13:7-9; Amos 7:8; 8:2). Israel has become detestable to him; he has no delight or pleasure in them; he hates them (Hos. 9:10; Mal. 1:10-12; Hos. 8:13; 9:15).<sup>6</sup>

But although God's wrath must surely be reckoned with, it is his mercy which is most directly related to Israel's hope, and it is his mercy which is celebrated by the prophets when they speak of Israel's hope:

Who is a God like thee, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion upon us, he will tread our iniquities under foot. Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob, and steadfast love to Abraham, as thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old (Micah 7:18-20).

Similar statements are found elsewhere in the prophetic writings. The prophet Jonah, disappointed by Yahweh's failure to destroy Nineveh and thus vindicate the prophet's honor, can appeal to Yahweh's mercy as his excuse for disobeying God's word in the first place and fleeing to Tarshish: "For I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil" (Jonah 4:2). It is on the basis of the same mercy that the prophet

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<sup>6</sup>The fierceness of Yahweh's anger is vividly portrayed in such pericopes as Is. 63:1-6; Hab. 3; Is. 34.

Joel exhorts his people to repentance (Joel 2:13-14; compare Dan. 9:4).

There is a depth and richness in God's love, however, which cannot be expressed by abstract concepts alone. It is a depth shown in such passages as the Song of the Vineyard. Yahweh, the lord of the vineyard, has bestowed upon his people Israel, viewed under the figure of the vineyard, the most tender care. He has prepared a place on a fertile hill, digging it, clearing it of stones, planting it with choice vines, setting a watchtower in its midst--what else could he have done for it (Is. 5:1-2)? Although a woman may forget her own child, yet Yahweh cannot forget his people; even the orphan finds mercy in him (Is. 49:14-16; Hos. 14:3). He will not forsake his people for they are precious in his eyes and he loves them (Is. 43:4). He loved them when they were children and led them with cords of love, his delight is in them, his steadfast love will not depart from them. When they are afflicted, he is afflicted with them. He will be merciful, and redeem them in his love. Even his punishment is administered to lead men to repentance (Hos. 11:4; Mal. 1:2; Is. 62:4; 54:10; 63:7-9; 49:10; Hos. 1:7; 2:23; Is. 63:7-9; Amos 4:6-13; Ezek. 18:23).

#### The Great Paradox

Thus Israel retained side by side in its classical confession and in its faith two views of Yahweh which might seem to be at least contradictory, if not mutually exclusive. Yahweh is a God of wrath and a God of mercy.

While we would like to resolve this paradox in one way or another, such as stating that although God hates sin, he loves the sinner; or

that although God may be angry, he becomes merciful to the penitent, this is no more possible in the Old Testament than it is in the New, where we are reminded that it was while we were yet sinners that Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). There is something about the relationship between God's love and his wrath which cannot be adequately described nor reduced to a simple formula.

Frequently we read passages which speak explicitly or implicitly of the cessation of Yahweh's anger. He repents of evil (Jer. 42:10); he will not be angry forever (Jer. 3:11); he will again have mercy (Zeph. 1:12-17). Although he has forsaken his people, he will gather them; although he was angry, he will heal; although he has smitten in his wrath, he will have favour in his mercy (Is. 54:7-8; 57:17-18; 60:10). As he has purposed to do evil, he now purposes to do good; as he has brought evil, so he will bring all the good that he has promised (Zech. 8:14-17; Jer. 32:42). He will have compassion upon his people as though he had never rejected them; yea, he will have mercy on Ephraim (Zech. 10:6; Jer. 31:20). His anger has turned away. He will heal them, love them, and be as the dew to them (Hos. 14:4-8).

It is, to be sure, true that in some cases this change in the attitude of Yahweh is said to be dependent upon the repentance of the people.<sup>7</sup> Again, it may be because of God's covenant that he acts (Zech. 9:11). At other times, however, it is realized that this change on Yahweh's part derives solely from his own nature. God will act for his own sake, for the sake of his name, for his own honor (Jer. 14:7;

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. Is. 30:18-19; 55:7; Jer. 17:8-11; Amos 5:14-15.



Jer. 14:21-22; Is. 43:5; 48:9-11; Ezek. 36:21-11 and frequently). Indeed, he may refuse to act on account of his covenant (Ezek. 16:61).

Nowhere is this stated more beautifully than in Hosea 11, where Yahweh himself is torn between love and wrath:

They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me. The sword shall rage against their cities, consume the bars of their gates, and devour them in their fortresses. My people are bent on turning away from me; so they are appointed to the yoke, and none shall remove it.

How can I give you up, O Ephraim! How can I hand you over, O Israel! How can I make you like Admah! How can I treat you like Zeboim! My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger, I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come to destroy. (Hos. 11:5-9).

It was because Yahweh was a God of mercy that Israel dared to hope.

#### Yahweh, the God of the Covenant

The mercy of Yahweh finds its primary expression in the fact that Yahweh has entered into a covenant with Israel, that he has made them his own and dwells in their midst.

The word "covenant" itself occurs relatively infrequently in the latter prophets in this specific sense. It must be assumed, however, that it is often at the base of the prophets' thoughts, as the references to a "new covenant" demand. In addition, we constantly find phraseology which reminds us of what is in fact the real essence of the covenant. The prophets picture a day when Yahweh will indeed be Israel's God, and they will be his people, just as they had become his

people at Sinai.<sup>8</sup> God will once again dwell in the midst of his people and be with them as he was in the past.<sup>9</sup> Israel will know that Yahweh is her God.<sup>10</sup>

Two comments of Vriezen state emphatically the significance of these remarks:

This security is, therefore, found in its purest state in those prophetic hopes of salvation which bear the mark of the Spirit of God in the fullest measure, such as those expectations of Jeremiah and Ezekiel which consider as the supreme salvation that Yahweh shall be Israel's God and Israel Yahweh's people, or those of Ezekiel and Zechariah which look forward to the time when God shall dwell among His people. These expectations are fundamentally of a piece with those we find in Jeremiah, in which the future relationship between God and Israel is described as a new covenant, in which all shall know the law of God in their hearts.<sup>11</sup>

Or, again,

This basic content of eschatology is the prophetic word of God that Jeremiah as well as Ezekiel impress upon their people in their greatest distress: 'Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God!' Justly Gensler repeats the remark of Franz Delitzsch that the principal point of the hope of salvation in the Old Testament is not the Messiah, but the parousia, the coming of Yahweh in the near future.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to these items, which form the essence of the covenant, it is also interesting to note those occasions in which certain

<sup>8</sup>Ex. 19:5-6; Is. 41:10; 44:5; 51:16; 56:4-5; 43:1; 52:8; Jer. 11:1-5; 14:9; 24:7; 30:22; 31:1,33; 32:38; 33:38; Ezek. 11:20; 14:4; 34:21,24; 36:28; 37:23,37; Hos. 1:10; 2:23; Zech. 2:11; 8:8; 13:10; Mal. 3:17.

<sup>9</sup>Is. 7:14; 8:8,10; 12:6; 41:10; 43:5,14; Jer. 14:9; 30:11; Ezek. 34:30; 37:24-28; 43:5,7,9; 48:8,10,12,35; Hos. 11:9; Joel 2:27; Amos 5:14; Mic. 3:11; Zeph. 3:5,15,17; Hag. 1:13; 2:4; Zech. 2:14-15; 8:3,8,23; 10:5.

<sup>10</sup>Ezek. 6:10; 16:62 and passim; Hos. 2:19; Joel 2:27; 3:17.

<sup>11</sup>Vriezen, p. 355.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 370.

descriptive elements are found either in connection with the term "covenant" or in a covenant context. In accordance with the purpose of this thesis, these elements may point out to us the way in which Israel and her prophets saw the covenant in relation to their future hope.

Thus, for example, we find that it is a new covenant (Jer. 31:31) which will endure forever (Is. 54:10; 55:3; 61:8; 24:5; Jer. 50:5; Ex. 16:60; 37:28). It is a covenant characterized by peace (Is. 54:10; Ezek. 34:25; 37:24). In one passage it equals "my love for David" (Is. 55:3); in another its contents are "my spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth" (Is. 59:21). The everlasting covenant means that God will not turn away from doing good to his people, but will put his fear within their hearts (Jer. 32:40). He will put his law within them and be their God, or will give his people a heart to know he is God (Jer. 31:33; 24:7). This change in the nature of man is a common theme in covenant contexts. God will give his people one heart (Jer. 32:39; Ezek. 11:19), a new heart (Ezek. 36:26), a new spirit (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26). He will sprinkle clean water upon them and forgive them their sins (Ezek. 36:25; Jer. 31:34).

As a result of this change in man's nature, he will know God; he will be wedded to God in righteousness, justice, steadfast love, mercy, and faithfulness (Hos. 2:19-20). Men will not need to be instructed in God's law, for it will be written in their hearts (Jer. 31:33-34). They will walk in his statutes, in "one way," and will not turn away from their God (Ezek. 36:27; Jer. 32:39-40). God will bless them,

multiply them, and put his sanctuary in their midst (Ezek. 37:26). They will dwell in safety in the land which God gave to their fathers (Jer. 32:37; Hos. 2:18; Ezek. 37:28). God will make a covenant with the wild beasts for them (or, the beasts will be banished from the land) so that his people may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods (Hos. 2:18; Ezek. 34:25). Rain will fall in its season, the trees and fields will bear their fruit (Ezek. 34:26-27; 36:30).

Israel will be delivered from the hand of those who enslaved her, and the bow, sword, and war will be abolished from the land (Ezek. 34:27; Hos. 2:28), they will dwell securely and without fear (Ezek. 34:28). They will inhabit prosperous plantations, so that they will no longer have to bear the reproach of the nations (Ezek. 34:29; 36:30). They will have David as king over them, and will all have one shepherd (Ezek. 37:24). Man will once again say, "This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden" (Ez. 37:35).

#### Other Descriptions of Yahweh

Although not the primary concern of this thesis, we should note in passing some of the other descriptions of Yahweh found in the prophets, since they give added color to the portrait of the God in whom Israel trusted. Yahweh is the only true God, and there is none like him and none besides him (Jer. 10:6; 10:10; Is. 43:11-12; 44:6-7; 45:6-21; 46:9). He has created all things by his power (Jer. 10:16; 51:15; Is. 40:12-37; 46:4), and he rules, preserves, and protects what he has made. He gives the sun and stirs up the sea (Jer. 31:35-37). He is a stronghold and refuge, an everlasting rock, a mighty warrior

(Is. 25:4-5; 26:4; Jer. 20:11; Zeph. 3:17). He is the strength, the song, and the salvation of his people, the fountain of living water, "our father" who works for those who wait upon him (Hab. 3:19; Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Is. 63:16; 64:4).

God is just, righteous, and holy (Jer. 9:24; 12:1; Is. 30:18; Zeph. 3:5; Ezek. 38:28). He hates evil and is too pure to look upon it (Zech. 8:14-17; Hab. 1:13). He delights in justice, steadfast love, and loving kindness (Amos 5:21-28; Mic. 6:8; Hos. 6:6), so that iniquities separate a man from his God (Is. 59:2).

God fills the heaven and the earth (Jer. 23:24). He is eternal (Dan. 6:26-27) and all-knowing, both seeing into the heart of man (Jer. 11:20; 17:10; 20:12) and declaring things before they happen (Is. 46:10-11; 48:3). He is wonderful in counsel and wisdom (Is. 28:29). He is completely outside of man's understanding; indeed, he appears to deceive man, to hide himself from man, even to give him laws which are not good (Is. 40:12-37; 55:8-9; Jer. 20:7; Is. 45:15; Ezek. 20:25).

## CHAPTER III

### ISRAEL'S DESTINY AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD

#### Israel, a Just and Holy People

Israel looked forward to the day when her sins would be forgiven. Then the land would be purged from its impurities and made holy, justice and righteousness would reign, and prosperity would prevail. Israel would once again assume its position among the important nations of the world. Jacob defines this situation with one word:

The restored state is quite well characterized by shalom, which means more than peace as opposed to war, although war also is eliminated in the new age (Is. 2.2-4; Mic. 5.2ff.). It expresses a state of plenitude and perfection in which everyone will attain his maximum intensity in a life freed from all limitations.<sup>1</sup>

The forgiveness of sins thus logically precedes the righteousness and holiness of the people and the attendant blessings, and it is frequently, though not always, pictured so in the prophets. Two elements are common to many of the passages which speak of the forgiveness of sins: (1) It is Yahweh himself who forgives sins; and (2) The forgiveness of sins is often linked with covenant passages. In addition we may separate the relevant passages into two groups, depending upon whether they picture this forgiveness in relation to the punishment of Israel or not.

Since the forgiveness of sins is an action of Yahweh which is logically anterior to our further discussions, it must be admitted

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<sup>1</sup>Edmond Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 326.

that it could be considered equally well in connection with the covenant in the previous chapter. The decision to place it here is an arbitrary one.

In connection with the first point, the remarks of Lindblom are very much to the point:

All the descriptions of the re-established Israel as cleansed from all evil elements and purified from guilt and sin are strongly theocentric. Yahweh, and Yahweh alone, brings it about. The new community is the shoot of His planting, the work of His hands. He opens the fountain of lustration; He pours out the spirit of repentance; He removes the guilt of the land. The rise of a new Israel is always thought of as a work of Yahweh's wonderful power and His paradoxical love for His elect people.<sup>2</sup>

The concluding words of Jeremiah's New Covenant passage are well known: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more" (Jer. 31:34). But similar passages are scattered more or less evenly throughout the prophetic writings. God will pardon those whom he leaves as a remnant in the land (Jer. 50:20). He will cleanse them from the guilt of their sin and rebellion (Jer. 33:8). Those who dwell in Jerusalem will be forgiven their iniquity (Is. 33:24).

The part which Yahweh plays in this forgiveness is stated emphatically: "I, I am He who blots out your transgression for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins" (Is. 43:25); "I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you" (Is. 44:22).

One of the most comprehensive passages in this respect is the following:

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<sup>2</sup>J. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 412.

Who is a God like thee, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion upon us, he will tread our iniquities under foot. Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob, and steadfast love to Abraham, as thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old (Micah 7:18-20).

Here we have in one pericope a wide sampling of the many Old Testament terms for sin and forgiveness. God pardons iniquity, he passes over transgression, he ceases to be angry, he has compassion, he treads iniquities under foot, he casts sins into the depths of the sea. And all this he does in accord with his promise to the fathers.

In Ezekiel too the connection with covenant is a prominent one. Though Israel has despised God's covenant, he will remember it and establish with them an everlasting covenant. Then Israel will be confounded and ashamed "when I forgive you all that you have done" (Ez. 16:59-63). The intervening references to such items as a new heart, a new spirit, and my people--your God also bring out the covenant import of Ezekiel 36:22-28, where the forgiveness of sins plays such an important role: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you" (Ez. 36:25; compare verses 29,33). As a result of God's saving and cleansing action he will once again become Israel's God, and they will be his people (Ezek. 37:23).

The book of Zechariah is unusually dramatic in its expectation of the forgiveness of sins. On a single day Yahweh will remove all of the guilt of the land. On the great day of the Lord there will be a fountain opened to cleanse both the people and their rulers from



all their guilt, their sin, and their uncleanness (Zech. 3:9; 13:1).

In a somewhat different picture, Hosea pictures his God as the one who "heals" the faithlessness of his people (Hos. 14:4). Mention should be made here also of the remainder of the passages which speak of a healing, although their precise connotation is often difficult to discern.<sup>3</sup>

In the preceding passages there is mention only of the fact of forgiveness, without reference to the punishment of the people for their sins. However, there is an almost equal number of passages in which punishment or chastisement plays a central part. Thus the herald is told to proclaim to Jerusalem "that her warfare is ended, her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Is. 40:2). So, too, Isaiah writes:

I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy. And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city (Isaiah 1:24-26).

It is only when the Lord has "washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning" that the remnant left in Jerusalem will be called holy (Is. 4:3-4).

Jeremiah sees the exile ending not only with a full end of the nations, but also with the punishment of Israel "in just measure" (Jer. 30:11). All Israel will be led from Babylon out into the wilderness, where Yahweh will enter into judgment with the rebellious, but

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. Jer. 3:22; 30:17; 33:6; 57:18-19; 58:8; Mal. 4:2; Hos. 6:1.

allow the remainder to enter into the promised land (Ez. 20:33-38). Although only a third of the people of the land will be left following the great eschatological battle at Jerusalem, even this third will be put into the furnace and refined like gold and silver, after which it will be called God's people (Zech. 13:9-10). The Messenger of the Covenant will be like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; he will refine and purify the sons of Levi until their offering is once again pure (Mal. 3:2-3).

In the last of the Servant Songs, it is the Servant of the Lord who bears the sin of his people. While the subject is too involved to be discussed in this paper, and all conclusions are tentative, the great majority of scholars accept the idea that the Servant is in some way or other an embodiment of Israel. The view set forth by Snaith, while perhaps not as philosophical as some would like, is interesting:

Our contention is that the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah xl.-lv. fits exactly into this orthodox setting, that Deutero-Isaiah is true to his predecessors Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and in turn is followed faithfully by his post-exilic successors who returned to Jerusalem. The Servant of the Lord in Deutero-Isaiah is in the first place Jehoiachin and the exiles of 597 B.C., but there is the same tendency as in Jeremiah and Ezekiel to shade off into the whole of the exiles, i.e., to include also those who were exiled in 586 B.C. This tendency explains why the Servant is always in exile, is sometimes distinguished from the exile as a whole (the "we") and yet at other times seems to be identified with them all. The prophet naturally finds it difficult to maintain the distinction, especially since it really was already a generation old, so that in his early post-exilic successors the distinction has altogether gone, and all who return are the people of God.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>N. H. Snaith, "The Servant of the Lord in Deutero-Isaiah," Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, edited by H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1946), p. 191. The most complete survey of the vast material on this subject is that by Christopher R. North, The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah (Second Edition; London: Oxford University

It is particularly interesting that this view supports the idea that Israel's punishment in exile was related to the forgiveness of sins.

A concept closely related to the forgiveness of sins is that of the removal of every kind of evil and wickedness from the land and its people. In Isaiah's New Exodus even the road upon which the returning exiles travel will be called holy, and no unclean thing will pass over it. There will not be so much as a wild animal to bother them as they make their way home (Is. 35:8-9 [text emended]).

In the Holy Land too every form of wickedness and impropriety will cease. When God returns his people to their land, they will abolish all its abominations and detestable things. The people will scatter their gold and silver images like unclean things; idols shall utterly pass away (Ezek. 11:18; Is. 2:18; 30:22; 31:7). In Zechariah's vision the woman symbolizing wickedness is removed from the Holy Land to Babylon. The proud, the arrogant, the evil doer, the ruthless, the scoffer will be removed. Even those who err in spirit and murmur will finally receive the proper instruction; the fool will no longer be thought wise. There will be no more curse. Only a humble and lowly people will be left (Zeph. 3:11-12; Mal. 4:1; Is. 2:17; 29:20-24; 32:5; Zech. 14:11).

As a result of the forgiveness of sins and the removal of wickedness, the land will be characterized by justice, righteousness, and

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Press, 1956). The insights of Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, translated by D. M. G. Stalker (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), II, 250-262, are original and exciting.

holiness. It is noteworthy, however, that the new state of the land is thought of by the prophets as due not only to the absence of sin, but that it is due to a separate and different act of God. It is Yahweh himself who will fill Zion with justice and righteousness. There will be justice and righteousness when the Spirit is poured out. God will return to Zion and dwell in its midst, and then Jerusalem will be called the faithful city and its mountain the holy mountain. He will restore her judges, so that it will be called the faithful and righteous city; he will make her overseers peace and her taskmasters righteousness. He will be a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment. Yahweh himself will be their God in faithfulness and righteousness (Is. 28:5-6; 32:15; 33:5-6; 60:15-18; Zech. 8:2-3).

It should be noted, however, that Yahweh's part in the action is not always explicit. There is no direct reference to his action in such passages as Isaiah 54:14 ("The land will be established in righteousness"), Isaiah 60:12 ("Your people shall all be righteous: they shall possess the land forever"), or Jeremiah 31:23-24 ("The Lord bless you, O habitation of righteousness, O holy hill").

Another closely related concept is that of the holiness of the people and their land. When Yahweh has washed away the filth and bloodstains of Zion, then those left will be called holy; when Yahweh's salvation appears, his redeemed will be called holy people (Is. 4:3-4; 62:10-12).

But a concept even stronger than that of the holiness of the people is that of the holiness of the land. Even the highway upon which the redeemed return from their exile will be called "the Holy

Way." Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will never pass through it again. God will return to Zion, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the holy mountain, the holy hill. In Ezekiel's view of the City of God the whole territory around the top of the mountain will be most holy. Jeremiah sees the valley of the dead bodies and ashes as encompassed by the walls of Jerusalem and sacred to Yahweh, and Zechariah with characteristic vividness sees even the bells of the horses inscribed with "Holy to the Lord" and every pot in Jerusalem as sacred to him and thus available for sacrifice (Joel 3:17; Is. 11:9; 52:1; 65:21; 1:26; 57:13; Jer. 31:23; Zech. 8:3; Obad. 17; Ezek. 43:12; Jer. 31:38-40; Zech. 14:20-21).

In general the view seems to be that everything which could in any way be considered inappropriate to a holy people will vanish. There will be no iniquity, no sin. Those who are left in Israel will do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth. No uncircumcised or unclean will again enter Jerusalem. There will be none who hurt or destroy, no more violence, devastation, or destruction. No more will the people see an "insolent people, the people of an obscure speech which you cannot comprehend, stammering in a tongue which you cannot understand" (Jer. 50:20; Zech. 3:12-13; Is. 65:25; 52:1; 60:18; 33:17-19).

#### A Secure, Prosperous, and Happy People

One of the largest groups of passages with which we are concerned show us in many and varied pictures the hopes which Israel had for a secure, prosperous, and happy life. While this may seem somewhat

strange to modern man, who tends to divorce the material and the spiritual, the Hebrew man saw here no contradiction.

Because Israel believed in its God as a God who grants life and abundance; including material earthly abundance, its hopes were also always directed towards earthly blessings, towards freedom and material plenty, towards victory over Israel's enemies and towards peace in Israel.<sup>5</sup>

The same point is made by Lindblom:

According to ancient Hebrew thought, moral perfection is always accompanied by shalom in the material as well as the spiritual sense. As might be expected in this period, prophecies of the future include vivid descriptions of every kind of welfare and bliss: ruined cities rebuilt, renewed fertility, abundant produce from fields and orchards, an increased population, peace and security; in a word, all that was included in the earthly ideal of ancient Israel.<sup>6</sup>

It will at once be obvious to one who reads the prophets that many passages which speak of earthly blessings do not lend themselves well to further analysis. At times a given passage may seem to speak equally well of peace, security, trust, or happiness. On the other hand, many times the basic thrust of a pericope is quite clear. Since it is advantageous to categorize as far as possible, some arbitrary judgments have been made.

The close relationship between the various subtopics of this area are clearly seen in a passage such as this:

. . . until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever (Isaiah 32:15-17).

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<sup>5</sup>Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), pp. 355-356.

<sup>6</sup>Lindblom, p. 391.

## A Secure People

One of the most frequently occurring pictures of Israel's hopes envisions a nation dwelling in complete security, quiet and unafraid. Some references directly attribute security or safety to God's people.<sup>7</sup> Others state quite directly that Yahweh will protect his people.<sup>8</sup> At other times this picture of Yahweh protecting his people is expressed with striking imagery, however, especially by the prophet Isaiah. Yahweh will protect Jerusalem like a hovering bird (Is. 31:5). He will be for them "a place of broad rivers and streams, where no galley with oars can go, nor stately ship can pass" (Is. 33:21). He will create over Mount Zion a cloud by day and a fire by night, a canopy and a pavilion over all the glory. It will be a shade from the heat by day and a refuge and shelter from the storm and rain. On the Second Exodus God shall go before his people and serve as their rearguard. After he puts an end to the pride of Philistia, he will encamp around his house like a guard. Jerusalem will have no need of walls, bars, or gates, for Yahweh himself will be a wall of fire around her. Israel will dwell beneath his shadow and be carried in his arms as a shepherd gathers his lambs (Is. 4:5-6; 52:12; 58:8; Zech. 9:7-8; 2:4-5; Ezek. 38:11; Hos. 14:7; Is. 40:11).

In addition to these direct statements concerning Israel's future security, and those which picture Yahweh as Israel's protector, there

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<sup>7</sup>Ezek. 34:25,28; 38:8,11; 39:25-27; Zech. 14:11; Jer. 23:6; 33:16.

<sup>8</sup>Is. 33:6; Jer. 32:37; Hos. 2:18; Zech. 9:15.

are yet others. Many of these portray Israel enjoying the natural fruits of her labors. Man will not labor in vain (Is. 65:23): "They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit (Is. 65:21).<sup>9</sup> In a somewhat similar picture Israel is seen as a stable planting. Israel will strike root as the poplar. They will stretch out their roots downward and bear fruit upward. God will plant them and not uproot them; he will build them and not tear them down. He will plant them in faithfulness. Or, to vary the picture slightly, Jerusalem will be like an unmovable tent, whose stakes will never be plucked up and whose cords will not be broken. They will inhabit and possess the land forever (Hos. 14:6; Is. 37:31; Jer. 24:6; 32:40; Is. 33:20; 60:21; Joel 3:20-21; Jer. 24:25).

Another common picture of stability is that of the shepherd and the sheep. "There shall again be habitations of shepherds resting their flocks. . . . flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them" (Jer. 32:12-13). Israel will be set together like sheep in a fold, and will pass through the gate with the Lord at their head. Sharon and Achor will again become a pasture for flocks. The people will have shepherds who care for them, so that none shall be missing anymore (Mic. 2:12-13; Is. 35:9; 65:10; Jer. 23:4).

The same picture of stability is graphically portrayed in the picture of a man sitting under his vine and fig tree with none to make

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<sup>9</sup>Cf. Amos 9:14; Jer. 31:5; Is. 62:8-9 for similar pictures. In the last passage cited it is particularly noteworthy that it is in the courts of Yahweh that they will eat and drink wine.



him afraid (Zech. 3:8-10; Micah 4:3-4; compare Jer. 23:4; Is. 54:14; Zeph. 3:13,15).

### A Peaceful People

The herald of the New Exodus is told to "speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended" (Is. 40:2). This hope for an enduring peace is one of the most common facets of Israel's hope for the future.

At times the references to peace are stated in so many words. The people will dwell in peaceful habitations. God will make their overseers peace. There will be a "sowing of peace" (Is. 32:18; Zech. 8:12; Is. 60:17). But more commonly one finds Israel's hopes for peace expressed in pictures drawn from daily life: "Happy are you who sow beside all waters, who let the feet of the ox and ass range free" (Is. 32:10). "You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all" (Is. 41:12).

Quite commonly peace is described as the absence of war and weapons of war. Yahweh will abolish the bow, sword, and war from the land. He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem. In the reign of the Messiah swords will be beaten into plowshears and spears into pruning hooks, and every bloody boot and garment will be cast into the fire.<sup>10</sup> Israel will have such a store of its enemies weapons that they will make fires from them for seven

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<sup>10</sup>For peace as an attribute of the Messiah's reign, infra, p. 50.

years and have no need to cut wood from their fields and forests (Hos. 2:18; Zech. 9:10; Ezek. 39:9-10).

The ideal description of Isaiah is well known but deserves to be seen in its entirety:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The suckling child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den" (Is. 11:6-8; compare 65:21-25).

#### A Fruitful Land

One of the things which certainly played a role in Israel's hopes for the future was her hope for a fertile and productive land. In most instances this fertility is pictured as the return of the natural fertility of the earth following a period of drought or warfare, but at other times it approaches the miraculous.

Hence we find that Israel will be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, "over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden" (Jer. 31:12). The somewhat cryptic Hosea 2:21 should probably be understood in this way also ("I will answer the heavens and they shall answer the earth; and the earth shall answer the rain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel"). Compare Zechariah 8:12 and Ezekiel 36:29-30 for similar conceptions.

Somewhat more exuberant titles and descriptions are also found. People will say that the once-desolate land has become a garden land-- it is like the Garden of Eden! When the Spirit is poured out the

wilderness will become a fruitful field, and the field a forest. And, most delightful of all, Amos can see the day when the "plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it" (Amos 9:13).

#### A Prosperous and Happy People

When those passages which can be quite easily referred to the security, peace, and fertility of Israel are removed, there remains a significant number which cannot be so easily classified. It is perhaps not too general to say that they set before us the picture of a happy people.

Once again, there are numerous passages in which joy, happiness, prosperity, and so forth are directly attributed to Israel's future. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Is. 35:10; 51:11). God will turn their mourning into joy and will give them gladness for sorrow. He will create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and he will be glad in her. Jerusalem will be for Yahweh a name of joy, a praise and a glory, and they will rejoice in the Lord. God will extend prosperity to her like a river, so that the land will again overflow with plenty. He will feed his people on good pasture and will satisfy their desires (Jer. 31:13; Is. 65:18-19; Jer. 33:9; Is. 41:14; Is. 54:13; Zech. 1:17; Ezek. 34:14; Jer. 31:25; 50:19; Joel 2:19,26).

But more commonly one finds that this hope of Israel expresses

itself through pictures which clearly and forcefully convey a particular idea of what true happiness is. They will sing on the night when a holy feast is kept, and be happy like one setting out to go to the mountain of the Lord to the accompaniment of the flute. They will adorn themselves with timbrels and go forth in the dance. Their hearts will be glad as with wine. Once again there will be the voice of mirth and gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the bride, the chanting of those who bring their offerings to Yahweh's house and sing, "Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever!" The young maidens will dance, and the men, both young and old, will be merry. The streets of Jerusalem will be full of people so old they must have staff in hand, and with young boys and girls playing. The days of God's people will be like those of a tree; even the child will be a hundred years old, while the sinner who lives only a hundred years will have died prematurely (Is. 30:29; Jer. 31:4; Zech. 10:7; Jer. 33:11-13; Zech. 8:4-5; Is. 65:20-22).

Israel will be radiant over God's goodness, and their life shall be like a watered garden. Their prosperity will be amazing--pinnacles of agate, gates of carbuncles, walls of precious stones. She will use gold instead of bronze, silver instead of iron, bronze instead of wood, iron instead of stones. Even the lame will take the prey. They will go forth leaping like calves from the stall. They will prosper like the poplar, the lily, and the olive, like grass and willows by a flowing stream (Jer. 31:12; Is. 54:11-13; 60:17; 33:23; 44:4; Hos. 14:5-7).

Viewed from the opposite angle there will be a complete absence

of those things which prevent happiness, or which are a sign of its absence. Thus there will be no weeping, no cry of distress, no sickness, no sorrow, sighing or mourning, no more premature death, none who hurt or destroy, no fear or terror; even death itself will be swallowed up (Is. 65:19-21; 33:24; 35:10; 51:1; Jer. 31:14; Is. 11:9; 54:14; 25:8).

This is perhaps also the best place to mention those passages which might speak of Israel's hope for a resurrection from the dead. While the precise meaning of Isaiah 25:6-8, 26:19, and Ezekiel 37:11-14 are all debated, most scholars seeing in them a reference to the revival of the nation rather than the individual, it is agreed by all that Daniel 12:1-3 does refer to a personal bodily resurrection, if only of the extremely good and extremely bad:

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever (Daniel 12:2-3).

### The Size, Extent, and Prestige of the Nation

#### A United Nation

As Israel looked forward to the future, she saw the day when the Northern and Southern kingdoms would once again be united as they had been in the days of David and Solomon. Judah and Ephraim would no longer harass one another, but together they would plunder the peoples around them. They would come together from the land of the north, weeping as they came, and seek out Zion to enter into an everlasting

covenant with Yahweh. The "sticks" of Israel and Judah will be joined together to form one nation under the rule of one king (Is. 11:13-14; Jer. 3:18; Jer. 50:4-5; Ezek. 37:19-23).

One suspects that the idea of the unity of the north and the south is much more frequently implicit than explicit. The use of poetic parallelism, however, makes it difficult to determine exactly whether such frequent combinations as Israel and Judah; Judah and Joseph; Jacob and Israel; and Jacob, Joseph, and Israel should be taken literally or not.<sup>11</sup>

#### The Size and Extent of the Land

It is somewhat surprising to find the number of passages which speak of the size of the land so few and, generally speaking, so colorless. Outside of a few very general statements, such as "thou hast increased the nation. . . . thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land" (Is. 26:15), "the boundary will be far extended" (Mic. 7:11), and "you will spread abroad to the right and to the left" (Is. 54:1-3), the only kind of relevant passage is that which describes various areas which the Israelites will inhabit, all of which seem to imply that the "ideal" boundaries of the holy land will be restored.<sup>12</sup>

Hence Israel's flocks will again feed in Bashan and Gilead as in days of old. Flocks will again pass under the hand of him who counts

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<sup>11</sup>Is. 14:1; 49:5; Zech. 10:6; Jer. 5:11; 23:5-6; 33:14-16; 50:20; Ezek. 39:25; Obad. 18.

<sup>12</sup>Gen. 15:18,21; Num. 34:1-15; Deut. 1:7-8.

them in the hill country, the Shephelah, the Negeb, the land of Benjamin, around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah. Israel will feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his desire will be satisfied on the hills of Ephraim and in Gilead (Mic. 7:14; Jer. 33:13; Jer. 50:19).

It would be possible to include some of the passages which relate to the foreign nations here, but none of them are at all explicit in this regard.

#### The Number of People

The passages which speak of Israel's population are both more numerous and more colorful. In addition to general references concerning the increased number of the people,<sup>13</sup> Israel's future hopes in this regard are expressed quite vividly. Jerusalem will have no walls because of the great number of men and cattle within her (Zech. 2:4).<sup>14</sup> There will be a noisy multitude of men under Yahweh's care; her men will be increased like a flock, as numerous as the sand of the sea; they will be as many as of old. Even the least one will become a clan. Children will say, "Make room for me to dwell in" (Mic. 2:13; Ezek. 36:37; Hos. 1:10; Zech. 10:8; Is. 60:22; 49:20).

#### The Prestige of the Nation

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<sup>13</sup>Cf. Is. 9:3; Jer. 23:3; Ezek. 36:9-10.

<sup>14</sup>This passage also shows us the inconsistency in the prophets themselves in the way in which a given picture might be interpreted. Jerusalem will have no walls (1) because of the great number of men and beasts in her and (2) because Yahweh will be a wall around her.

To a nation that had been defeated and scattered, the matter of the prestige of the nation both in its own sight and before the nations of the world must have been an important one. The great number of passages which speak of this aspect of Israel's future hope seem to confirm this opinion.

Again and again we read that Israel's shame will be turned into praise and glory. Their descendants will be known among the nations. Israel will ride upon the heights of the earth and will shine like the jewels of a crown. She will exercise her former dominion, possess her enemies, and nations will drink from her glory. The nations that refuse to serve her will perish.<sup>15</sup> Israel will be a third with Egypt and Assyria, and the wealth of the nations will come in to her. Ten men will lay hold of the Jew from every kind of nation and beg for the privilege of accompanying him, since they have heard that God is with him alone (Zeph. 3:19-20; Is. 61:6-9; Is. 58:14; Zech. 9:16; Amos 9:12; Mic. 4:8; Is. 66:11; 19:24; 45:14; 60:5-7; Zech. 8:23).

It is particularly interesting in this respect to notice that the most commonly mentioned cause of Israel's shame is her famine and hunger (Ezek. 34:29; 36:25-31; Joel 2:18-19). The only other specific causes mentioned are disaster, death, and its own proud and haughty people (Zech. 3:18-20; Is. 25:8; Zech. 3:11-13).

Even more important, Israel will again be honored before God. She will be to him a name of joy, a praise, and a glory; she shall be a beautiful crown in his hand (Jer. 33:6-9; Is. 62:1-5).

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<sup>15</sup>Infra, pp. 42-44.



What is true in general about the prestige of the holy land is true in particular of her capitol, Jerusalem. Since God will dwell in the midst of the city in his temple and will reign over his remnant on Mount Zion, Jerusalem will be called "The Lord is There." She will be a beautiful crown, a royal diadem, "My delight is in her." All the land will be turned into a plain, but Jerusalem will remain aloft on her mountain. The mountain of the house of the Lord will be the highest of mountains, and the beauty of Lebanon will come to glorify God's sanctuary. Nations will come to seek Yahweh in Jerusalem, and his instruction will go forth from the temple. A continuous stream of fresh water will flow forth from the temple and revitalize the land (Micah 4:7; Ezek. 48:35; Is. 62:1-5; Zech. 14:10; Is. 2:2-3; Mic. 4:1-2; Zech. 8:20-23; Zech. 14:8; Ezek. 47:1-12).

But Israel will not only receive the plaudits of the nations, she will also stand in a peculiar relationship to them from which they too will benefit. She will be to them a blessing and a light (Is. 19:24; Zech. 8:13; Is. 65:8; Is. 49:6; 60:1-3).

#### A Restored Nation

It should not pass without notice that all of Israel's hopes for the future center around the restoration of the people to their old land. In many cases this is explicit; it should no doubt be assumed elsewhere. There is no passage which implies anything to the contrary.<sup>16</sup> Von Rad's comment with respect to Ezekiel can be applied

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<sup>16</sup>Daniel 12:2-3. Contrast, however, Ezek. 37:11-14; where the result of the revival of the nation is life in Palestine.

much more widely:

Whenever Ezekiel speaks of the lot of the new Israel, he always assumes an historical, and also a political, existence for God's people within their own ancestral land. Their members are to be enrolled in the register of Israel's citizens and to return to the land of Israel (Ezek. xiii.9). Jahweh will then multiply the nation and bless the land with fruitfulness (Ezek. xxxvi.9,29f., 37). In this connection, Ezekiel compares the once desolate land with the Garden of Eden (Ezek. xxxvi.35), but clearly the prophet was not envisaging any mythological "paradise-like" conditions, or some kind of Elysian fields. Farmers will till the land for the future (Ezek. xxxvi.34), and the cities will even be refortified (Ezek. xxxvi.35).<sup>17</sup>

It would serve little purpose to try to assemble all of the passages which envision a restoration. It is informative to notice, however, something of the vocabulary used in portraying the idea, and, secondly, to observe once again that it is Yahweh alone who accomplishes this restoration:

For thus says the Lord God: Behold I, I myself, will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the fountains, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, on a fat pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over, I will feed them in justice (Ezek. 34:11-16).

Such references could be multiplied, but it is always Yahweh who delivers, saves, redeems, ransoms, gathers together, brings out, returns, and brings in his people to their land.

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<sup>17</sup>von Rad, II, 234.

It is around this idea of restoration that the Second Exodus is structured, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the idea of restoration is inherent in that of the Second Exodus. But whatever the case, the terminology used to describe that great event is both so colorful and so closely related to that which we have encountered elsewhere in Israel's hopes that it bears some scrutiny.

Israel's march through the desert will be attended by all kinds of miraculous and near-miraculous phenomena. The desert will have all the beauty of Lebanon, Sharon, and Carmel. There will be rivers and fountains in the desert so that none will thirst, or, in another view, God will again give his people water to drink from a rock as he did on the route from Egypt. There will be, in fact, so much water that the desert will be in danger of becoming a swamp! The cedar, the acacia, the olive, the cypress, and the myrtle will grow instead of the thorn. There will be a highway in the wilderness for the redeemed to pass over, the mountains and hills will be prepared, and the trees will clap their hands as God's people pass through their midst. The highway will be so holy that no unclean thing will pass over it, no wild beast will trouble them. God himself will both go before them and be their rearguard; he will lead them in a straight path so that none will stumble. The people will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will they suffer from the sun or wind. The valley of Achor will become a door of hope for them; this time it will be said, "The people . . . found grace in the wilderness." No more will the people swear by the name of the God who brought them up from Egypt, but they will confess "as the Lord lives who brought up the people of

Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them" (Is. 35:1-10; 41:17-20; 43:19-21; 48:20-22; 49:11-13; 52:12; 55:12-13; Jer. 31:7-9; Hos. 2:14-15; Jer. 16:15).

In connection with the restoration, it is also of interest to notice some of the unusual recipients of God's action: the blind, the deaf, the lame, the prisoners, the pregnant, and the outcast (Is. 35:3-7; 49:8-10; Jer. 31:7-9; Zeph. 3:18-20). From some corner there was certainly a strong reaction against the proud and mighty.

Several reasons could no doubt be found for the fact that the restoration is always envisaged as taking place upon Palestinian soil, among them the obvious one that this was the land which Israel knew and from which she had been exiled. Two other reasons are worthy of particular note, however. First, the gift of the promised land was an integral part of Yahweh's oath with the fathers, and God would remain faithful to his covenant. In several of the passages under consideration it is specifically mentioned that this was the land which was given to the fathers.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, Jerusalem, Zion, and the temple was Yahweh's abode.<sup>19</sup> While it is true that God is where his people are, the reverse also bears remembering: God's people want to be where he is.

#### Israel's Enemies

While this topic might seem to lie outside of the scope of this

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<sup>18</sup>Jer. 3:18; 30:2-3; Is. 58:14; Ezek. 36:28; 38:25.

<sup>19</sup>Is. 2:2-3; Mic. 4:2-3; Ezek. 43:7; Joel 3:17; Zech. 8:3.

paper, the relationship between Israel's enemies and her future hope is so close and the concept is so important that not to treat it here would seem to distort the total picture of Israel's future hope which we are trying to view. We shall consider our references in three groups, depending upon whether they view Israel's enemies as destroyed, enslaved, or converted to the worship of Yahweh. While the latter two of these concepts are not mutually exclusive, and it may be debated, no matter how strong the language, whether destruction really means total destruction, it seems clear for our purposes that the emphasis usually falls upon one or another of these categories.

The passages which speak of the destruction of a particular foe or foes of Israel are most numerous. One can scarcely think of a possible enemy of Israel that is not included in the list. To mention a few of the more specific references, we find that Moab, Edom, Philistia, Ethiopia, Damascus, Hamath, the seacoast and Ashkelon, Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt all find themselves upon the list of those slated for destruction (Is. 11:13-26; 30:31-33; Zeph. 2:5-15; Zech. 2:9; 9:1; Joel 3:19-20; and elsewhere).

One thinks in this regard most readily of the so-called prophecies against the nations, where we find literally chapters of prophecies of destruction to be rained upon the enemies of Israel. These are found not only in the major prophets (Isaiah 13-23; Jeremiah 46-51; and Ezekiel 25-32), but also have their counterpart on a smaller scale in some of the minor prophets,<sup>20</sup> strongly suggesting that such

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<sup>20</sup>Amos 1:3-2:3; Zech. 9:1-8; Zeph. 2:1-15.

prophecies formed a regular part of the prophetic tradition.

Almost as common, there is a kind of general reference to the destruction of Israel's enemies, without particular regard to who they might be. Yahweh is angry with the nations and he will punish the kings of the earth. He will make a full end of the nations where his people have been scattered; he will execute judgments upon their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. He will render requital to the coastlands; those who harass Judah will be cut off, those who swallowed her up will be far away. The nations will be gathered to Jehoshaphat for judgment, and all who come up to fight against Jerusalem will be smitten with the plague. Zechariah's vision of the four horns and four smiths likewise tells of the destruction of those who scattered Israel (Zech. 1:15; Is. 24:21-23; Jer. 30:10-11; Ezek. 28:26; Is. 59:18; Is. 11:13; 49:20; Joel 3:1-3; Zech. 14:12-15; 1:18-21).

Israel will despoil those who despoiled them and plunder those who plundered them. Their enemies will be cut off; their oppressors will eat their own flesh and blood. Israel will put them on like a garment (Ezek. 39:10; Mic. 4:13; Is. 49:17,26).<sup>21</sup>

In many of the passages before us Yahweh is viewed as the one who will wreak this destruction, but frequently it is explicit that it is Israel who will be God's agent. God will make of her

a threshing sledge, new, sharp, and having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them, and you shall make the hills like

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<sup>21</sup>Zeph. 3:18-20; Jer. 30:20; Is. 41:11-13; 14:1-2; Mic. 5:7-9; Zeph. 3:15; Mal. 4:1-3.

chaff. You shall winnow them and the wind shall carry them away, and the tempest shall scatter them (Isaiah 41:15-16).

Israel will be like a lion among her adversaries, treading down and tearing to pieces. She will beat in pieces with iron horn and bronze hoofs many nations (Micah 5:8-9; 4:13).

No where is this role of Israel as God's instrument more pronounced than in the book of Zechariah. Judah is God's bow, and Ephraim his arrow. He will wield them like a warrior's sword. The Lord will protect his people, and they shall devour and tread down the slingers and drink their blood like wine. The house of Judah is his proud steed in battle, and they will trample the foe in the mud of the street. Jerusalem will be a cup of reeling to all the people round about her. She will be a heavy stone; all those who try to lift it will hurt themselves upon it. They will be like a fire, devouring all peoples round about to the right and to the left (Zech. 9:13-15; 10:3-5; 12:2-6).

An interesting related concept, though somewhat infrequent and unclear in the Old Testament, is that of the sacrificial feast of Yahweh. Yahweh is preparing a great sacrificial feast at which his enemies will be the victims and form the menu. He summons the birds and beasts to come and take their fill; even Israel shall drink their blood and eat their flesh. Although the reference in Isaiah 25:6 is dubious, such passages seem to form at least a part of the background to the Messianic banquet of New Testament times (Is. 34:5-7; Jer. 46:10; Zech. 9:15; Ezek. 39:17-20; Is. 15:6; II Baruch 29:3-4; IV Ezra 6:52; Rev. 19:17-21).

## The Servants of Israel

It is striking that, with a single possible exception, all of the passages which refer to the nations as slaves of Israel are found in Isaiah. Two of these are extremely strong and incontrovertible in their intent:

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste (Isaiah 60:12).

And the people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the Lord's land as male and female slaves; they will take captive those who were their captors, and rule over those who oppressed them (Isaiah 14:2).

Kings and queens will be their foster-parents and come and lick the dust of their feet; foreigners shall build up their walls, and kings will minister to them (Is. 49:23; 60:10).

The somewhat exceptional passage is Joel 3:7-8, where God has given all the region of Philistia to the sons of Judah. The Israelites, however, sell the Philistines to the Sabeans rather than keep them as slaves.

## Worshippers of Yahweh

Yet a third manner in which the fate of Israel's enemies is pictured shows them to be worshippers of Yahweh. Many peoples will say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths" (Is. 2:3; compare Mic. 4:2). All the nations will gather to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem, and will no more follow their own evil heart. They will entreat the favour of the Lord, and men will



lay hold of the Jew's clothing and beg to accompany him, since he has heard that God is with him only. Gifts will be brought to the Lord from a tall and smooth people (Jer. 3:17; Zech. 8:20-23; Is. 18:7).

In many cases this conversion seems to be viewed somewhat negatively, that is, it is a more or less natural result of being subject to Israel to be subject to Israel's God, and is in a sense but another step in the humiliation of the enemy. They will come trembling from their holes licking the dust and come in fear and dread to Yahweh. Those who survive the great final battle will come up to Jerusalem each year to observe the feast of booths; and if they do not come up, they will receive no rain, but will be struck with the plague instead. If Israel's neighbors learn Yahweh's name and walk in his ways, they will be built up in the midst of his people; but if they will not listen, they will be destroyed. Judah will be a terror to the Egyptians, and five of their cities will both speak Israel's language--the language of Canaan--and swear allegiance to her God. One of these will be none other than Heliopolis, the City of the Sun! There will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land, and a pillar to him at its border, and the Egyptians will know Yahweh, both making vows and performing them beneath Yahweh's disciplining hand. They will fear the name of the Lord from east to west (Mic. 7:17; Zech. 14:16-19; Jer. 12:17; Is. 19:17-22; 59:19).

Admittedly, this element is not always so strong, and may be missing altogether. Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be his people, and he their God, although Israel will still be his particular possession. The camels of Midian,

and they from Sheba, the flocks and rams from Kedar and Nebaioth will be acceptable upon Yahweh's altar, and they will minister to Israel. God's house will be called a house of prayer for all nations--even for the eunuch, the foreigner, and the outcasts of Israel. God will gather yet others besides those already gathered and bring them to his holy mountain. Such foreigners who join themselves to the Lord and keep his Sabbath and hold fast his covenant will be brought to his holy mountain and made joyful in his house of prayer. And some of these foreigners God will even take for priests and Levites (Zech. 2:11; Is. 60:4-7; Is. 56:3-8; Is. 66:21).<sup>22</sup>

#### Israel's Leaders

God

In chapter II it was emphasized that Israel's hopes were always grounded in Yahweh.<sup>23</sup> To set the following items in proper perspective, however, it should be noted here also.

Apart from the innumerable references which speak of the uniqueness of Yahweh, and of Israel's complete dependence upon him, the fact that Yahweh is considered the true ruler in Israel is at times explicit: "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our ruler, the Lord is our king; he will save us" (Is. 33:20-22). He is or will be the

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<sup>22</sup>In Is. 19:23-24 Assyria and Egypt are assigned a position equal to that of Israel. It is probable, however, that the reason for this statement is not the exaltation of Assyria, which already held a position of prominence, but the exaltation of Israel.

<sup>23</sup>Supra, pp. 9-10.

king over the whole earth (Ezek. 20:33; Mic. 2:13; Zeph. 3:15; Zech. 14:9).

Many other pictures could no doubt be viewed as illustrating the leadership of Yahweh, such as the shepherd picture, Yahweh as the one who goes before his people, and so forth. Such a topic would provide sufficient material for a study in its own right, however, and we shall pass by it here.

#### King-Messiah

Apart from Yahweh, Israel's hopes for the future, when centered around a human leader, are most commonly centered around an earthly ruler of David's line. However, it should be noted that quite commonly there is no reference at all to an earthly leader in the pericopes which we have been studying.

In several instances it is simply stated without further qualification that it will be David himself who will be their ruler. Israel will serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom God will raise up for them. "My servant David" will be king and prince over them. Repentant Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king (Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:24; 37:24-25; Hos. 3:5).

It would appear rather doubtful whether we should soften the impact of the above statements to mean simply "a descendant of David," as we tend to do automatically. There is certainly at least a possibility that Israel understood the statements literally.

Other passages do speak explicitly of the Davidic line, of course. We read of the restoration of the booth of David, the tent of David,

and of kings who will sit on the throne of David (Amos 9:11; Is. 16:5; Is. 9:7; Jer. 17:25). The same meaning would seem to be most probable when we read of a righteous Branch of David, the root of Jesse, a shoot from the stem of Jesse, my servant the Branch (Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Is. 11:10; Zech. 3:8).<sup>24</sup>

Other passages also speak of the unique nature of the relationship between David and/or his house and the Lord. God calls his people to come to him that he may make with them an everlasting covenant, "my steadfast sure love for David." On the day of the great battle at Jerusalem, the weakest of the people will be like David, while the house of David will be like God! It is from the house of Judah that the cornerstone, the tent peg, the battle bow, and every ruler shall come. It seems most likely that the reason for the unique position of Bethlehem in Micah 5:2-4 is to be ascribed to its position as the city of David (Is. 55:3; Zech. 12:8; 10:4; Mic. 5:2-4).

Despite the large number of references to David and his line, however, Israel's future leader is sometimes described without reference to David. He is simply a king (Is. 33:17; Zech. 9:9; Ezek. 37:22), a prince and ruler (Jer. 30:21), a king and prince (Is. 32:1). Micah's reference to "seven shepherds and eight princes of men" is a well-known conundrum.

In many cases very little, if anything, is said about the actual rule of the king-messiah, while, in other cases, the description is more complete. At times the earthly leader seems to be more of an appendage

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<sup>24</sup>In Is. 4:2 the "branch of the Lord" seems to refer to Israel.

to Yahweh's action than an integral part of it.

Thus, for example, in Zechariah 3:6-10 we have one of the prophecies of the Branch. But his connection with the resulting bliss is extremely loose. It is Yahweh who will remove the guilt of the land in a single day, while each man will sit under his vine and fig tree. On the day when Yahweh shakes the heaven and earth he will take Zerubbabel and make him like a signet ring. The Messiah will reign alongside of the priest and complete the building of the temple (Hag. 2:20-23; Zech. 4:1-14; 6:9-14).<sup>25</sup>

Otherwise we generally see the reign of the king-messiah to be marked by the same characteristics which we have described above without reference to the Messiah. For example, von Rad states, in considering the exercise of his office as a result of the charism in Isaiah 11:1-8:

His principal office is that of arbiter, in which he cares particularly for those whose legal standing is weak. Like the royal psalms--cp. particularly Ps. LXXII. 12-14--Isaiah regards the anointed one's commission as consisting pre-eminently in the establishment of the divine justice on earth.<sup>26</sup>

It is certainly true that the reign of the Messiah is most frequently characterized by the marks of justice and righteousness. Equally true, it will be a reign of peace, marked by the removal of weapons and implements of war, in which the yoke will depart from Israel and the wicked will be destroyed (Is. 9:7; 11:4-5; 16:4-5; Jer. 23:5; Is. 9:4-6; Zech. 9:9-10).

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<sup>25</sup>The text in the last passage is emended.

<sup>26</sup>von Rad, II, 169-170.

The land will dwell in security (Zech. 3:10; Jer. 23:5; Mic. 5:4). All kinds of "birds and beasts" will dwell in and beneath the protective branches of the Messiah. He will be a hiding place, a covert, and a shade, and will shepherd his people. He will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and stand as an ensign to the nations. The exiles will return home. His dominion will be universal and eternal. The nation will be multiplied and its joy increased. Even the animals will be at peace with one another and with man. There will be none who hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. Man will exercise proper judgment, so that the fool will no longer be thought wise. The whole earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Ezek. 17:22-24; Is. 32:1-5; 34:20; Mic. 5:3; Is. 11:1-12; Zech. 9:10; Is. 9:2-7; 65:25).<sup>27</sup>

Those characteristics of the messiah-king which are unique to him are of particular interest. His origin is from of old, from ancient days. The Spirit rests upon him in unusual measure, and he has the unique privilege of approaching God. He is Mighty God, Everlasting Father. Many would include here also the vicarious suffering of the Servant of Yahweh (Mic. 5:2; Is. 11:1-5; Jer. 30:21; Is. 9:6; 52:13-53:12).

### The Priesthood

One of the more noteworthy aspects of Israel's hopes for the

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<sup>27</sup>Approximately the same blessings are enumerated in Is. 65:25, where there is no messiah; and in Is. 11:6-9; which is strongly messianic.

future is the relative paucity of references to the priesthood. Nevertheless, we are told that God's covenant with the Levitical priests and with the house of David is as sure as that with day and night. Their number will be multiplied like the sand of the sea, and they will never lack a man to present offerings and sacrifices (Jer. 33: 17-26). Apart from the groups of references which follow, only two passages mention the priesthood as part of Israel's hopes. God will "feast the soul of the priests with abundance" (Jer. 31:14). It is the avowed purpose of the messenger of the covenant to purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver until they present a right offering to the Lord (Mal. 3:3).

In the final chapters of Isaiah we find several mentions of the priesthood. Israelites will be called the priests of the Lord, while foreigners will be their plowmen and vinedressers. Another passage states that some of these foreigners too will become priests and Levites. Isaiah 60:7 too might be taken to indicate that a closer relationship will exist between Yahweh and foreigners, and not just that he will accept their sacrifices (Is. 61:5-6; 66:21; 60:7).

Zechariah also contains several references to the priesthood. Joshua the high priest is accused by Satan and has removed from him the unclean contacts of the exile. Two other lengthy passages picture the united rule of the king and the priest, and the peaceful relations between them (Zech. 4:1-14; 6:9-14).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>The text in the last passage is difficult. As it stands, the high priest Joshua is to be crowned, and is called the Branch who will build the temple. The subsequent reference in v. 13 to a priest who

In the book of Ezekiel the priesthood is mentioned in his "City of God," although even there not in the prominent role which one might expect. The Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, will draw near to Yahweh to minister to him, while the Levites are reduced to the role of subservient ministers (Ezek. 44:9-16). When the Holy Land is apportioned it then shows the result of a threefold gradation, with the Lord's portion divided into three portions, the "most holy" portion immediately adjacent to the temple being assigned to the Levitical priests, a second area to the other Levites, and the remainder of the land to the whole tribe of Judah (Ezek. 45:1-6; 48:8-22).

It should perhaps be mentioned in this connection that there is also a tradition of the rejection of the priesthood (compare Hosea 4:4-6; Malachi 2:1-10).

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will stand by his throne has led many to emend the previous reference to read Zerubbabel, assuming that what had happened to Zerubbabel in the meantime had led to the excising of his name.



## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Before passing on to our concluding remarks, let us summarize briefly the dominant elements in Israel's hopes for the future as we have seen them portrayed in the prophets.

Israel's hopes for the future were always in the first place hopes which had their sole basis for existence in Yahweh. While this Yahweh was known to be both a God of wrath and of mercy, Israel knew also that, although she could not neglect the former element--as the exile so clearly emphasized--it is in God's mercy alone that she had reason to hope. Because God is who he is, he has mercy upon Israel, forgives them their sins, enters into a covenant with them, and makes them his people.

The idea of covenant is of primary importance in the prophets. Prophetic terminology constantly refers back to concepts which in fact state the essence of the covenant, that is, Yahweh will be Israel's God and they will be his people; God will dwell in their midst; Israel will know God.

Israel sees her covenant relationship to God as resulting in a change in man as a result of which his relationship to God is made perfect. God's law dwells within man, so that man knows God and walks in his law. He is wedded to him in righteousness. God dwells in his midst and blesses him with peace, security, prosperity, and victory over his enemies. David will once again be his king; the land will become like the Garden of Eden.

The forgiveness of sins is frequently, though not always, connected with the idea of covenant. In any case, however, it is always Yahweh who accomplishes the desired forgiveness. Sometimes it is explicit that this forgiveness of sins is accomplished through, or accompanied by, the punishment of Israel. At other times, however, the emphasis remains upon the sovereignty and mercy connected with Yahweh's redeeming act, without explicit reference to Israel's punishment. The Servant of Yahweh fits well into either of these categories, depending upon the interpretation.

Closely associated with the idea of the forgiveness of sins is that of the removal of every kind of impurity from the land, and the resultant idea of the righteousness and holiness of the land and its people. This too Yahweh accomplishes through his own grace and sovereignty. In particular, every evil in any way associated with idolatry will be removed, and every ritually and morally offensive act will be terminated. The land and its people will be completely sanctified ("set apart") to Yahweh.

Since Israel saw its God to be the ruler over every sphere of human activity, and, in particular, saw her relationship to other men and to the world as being determined by the relationship in which she stood to Yahweh, she hoped for every kind of material blessing as a result of her new relationship to Yahweh. Yahweh would protect his people and care for their needs, so that they would dwell in security and peace. Even though they might toil, the fruits of their labors would be theirs to enjoy. There would be no more war. The land would bear its fruit in its season; indeed, with the blessings of Yahweh

fruitfulness would be almost unlimited. God's people would be prosperous and happy. The simple joys of life, such as singing, dancing, and feasting, as well as the supernatural blessings of Yahweh would encompass them. There would be a complete lack of everything which brings sorrow to the heart of man.

Israel always pictured her hopes for the future as accomplished through the restored nation of Israel. The old unity of the north and the south would be restored, and the nation would once again expand to its ideal limits. Its population would be greatly increased. Israel would no longer be ashamed before the nations or before her God, who would make Jerusalem his abode.

In connection with the restoration, it was again pointed out that Israel's faith for resulted from her faith in--her hopes for material and spiritual blessings resulted from her faith in Yahweh. This is most graphically illustrated in the passages concerning the Second Exodus. Yahweh has a particular concern for the outcasts of Israel.

A major part of the hopes of Israel could be accomplished only through a radical change in the relationship between Israel and her enemies. Hence the prophets of Israel saw the day when Israel would again be victorious over her enemies. At times the enemies of Israel are pictured as being destroyed, at times they will become the slaves of Israel, in still other passages they are pictured as converted to the worship of Israel's God.

In old Israel it was always Yahweh alone who was viewed as the ruler of Israel, and this fact is re-confirmed in the prophets. He may exercise his rule, however, through various human agents. When

Israel's hopes for the future picture such a human agent, it is most commonly a king of David's line. When the reign of this Davidic king is described, it is most commonly in terms of the righteousness, security, peace, prosperity, and so forth, which we have noted previously. The leadership of the priesthood is given minor attention; that of the prophet as we know it is not mentioned.

When one has thus isolated and summarized the hopes of Israel, he is still confronted with a wealth of diverse and heterogeneous conceptions which perhaps have real significance only to one who has personally worked through the vast amount of material at hand. This amazing diversity of material has led men like Frost to conclude:

The conception of the conditions and manner of life in the New Age were as various as the writers themselves. Each dreamed his own dreams and saw his own visions.<sup>1</sup>

Or, as Köhler puts it somewhat more poetically, we have here a case of polyphony, not symphony.<sup>2</sup> That is to say, the Old Testament does not present us with a unified, harmonized, carefully systematized picture of Israel's hopes; but rather sets before us on a broad canvas a picture which achieves its grandeur by intertwining and setting forth before us a variety of smaller portraits.

But was there not a common background or a particular factor which informed the dreams and visions of the various prophets? Can we stop at simply saying, "Each man dreamed his own dreams and saw his own

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<sup>1</sup>S. B. Frost, Old Testament Apocalyptic (London: The Epworth Press, 1952), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Ludwig Köhler, Old Testament Theology, translated by A. S. Todd (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 237-238.

visions"? The intelligent reader is certain to ask at least two closely related questions: (1) Why are the hopes of Israel painted in such varied hues; and (2) What is the source of such varied conceptions?

One could answer, of course, that they are inspired by God, and therefore he is both the reason for their divergence and the source for the same. While this is true, however, to say this and no more does no particular honor to God, nor does it necessarily indicate the piety of the reader, for what it really means is that he is reading his own idea into the text as to the manner in which such inspiration took place. Differences should not be harmonized, nor should they be ignored.

The Lutheran Christian should proceed on a higher level than this. Although he accepts without question the fact of the inspiration of God's word in its totality, he is willing to let it stand and speak to him in all of its richness and in all of its diversity, giving equal honor to even the most diverse elements. Any theory of inspiration which does not take such elements into proper account cannot be said to honor God, for it amounts to ignoring the very material which is supposed to be inspired. Inspiration must take account of the facts both of the divine origin of the Bible and of the human situation to which it spoke. As a historically conditioned writing it was addressed to a particular people at a particular time and hence had specific meaning for them. To ignore this fact leads only to irrelevance.

We might begin then by noting that almost all scholars find the bases of the pictures which Israel used to describe her future hope to

lie in three different eras or Golden Ages, although the particular emphasis laid upon each of the eras by various scholars might differ widely. The three periods are these: (1) The Golden Age of Paradise; (2) The Mosaic era, including Exodus, covenant, and wilderness wandering; and (3) The Davidic-Solomonic golden age.

Some scholars find the source of almost all of the forms of Israel's future hopes in the Paradise account and the myths which supposedly surrounded it. For them the principal Endzeit wird Urzeit is the dominant one, man's final state will be identical with that of man in Paradise. Hummel states:

All the material, spiritual, and ethical blessings which were present then [at creation] or which Jahweh had showered upon His elected people since the fall into sin would now be present again. . . . Jahweh's activity in the new creation would merely be a continuation of what He had purposed in creation and covenant all along.<sup>3</sup>

Jacob too finds many allusions to the paradise account in discussing the hopes of Israel:

The idea of paradise underlies all those passages which speak of the felicity at the end of time. The nature of paradise is of the nature of fairy tales. The food consists of wonderful dishes which confer immortality and knowledge; there will be a profusion of milk or honey, oil and wine, depending upon whether the idea is looked upon from a nomadic or sedentary viewpoint. Beauty, innocence, and wisdom, the attributes of the first human beings, will return. The theme of the life giving waters of the four rivers returns in Ezekiel, and may be seen in the "river of delights" in Psalm 36:9.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Horace D. Hummel, "A Survey of and Approach to the Problems of Old Testament Eschatology" (Unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, 1952), p. 101.

<sup>4</sup>Edmond Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, translated by Arthur W. Heathcote and Philip J. Allcock (New York: Harper and Row, 1955), p. 325.

Other scholars see still other elements as derived from the primitive account of paradise. Heinisch, for example, sees the echo of paradise in the fountain flowing from the temple; in the extreme fertility, not only of Canaan, but also of the wilderness; in the taming of the wild animals; and in Yahweh's becoming a protective wall of fire around Jerusalem (compare the cherubim). Where sin and death had reigned (wilderness and Dead Sea) there will be life (Eden and sweet water) mediated through the sanctuary.<sup>5</sup>

Some scholars find closely associated ideas in the conception of an Urmensch, a mythical "ideal man," and in that of the Garden and/or Mountain of the Gods.<sup>6</sup>

The second major era which strongly influenced the mode in which Israel expressed her future hopes is that of Moses and the Exodus.<sup>7</sup> Jacob's point of view should be noted to balance properly his previous statements concerning paradise:

Israel's faith was nourished less on myths connected with the beginnings--the absence of allusions to which is quite striking--than on the great facts of the past, on those tsideqot Yahweh

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<sup>5</sup>Paul Heinisch, Theology of the Old Testament, translated by William Heidt (Collegeville, Minnesota; The Liturgical Press, 1950), p. 301.

<sup>6</sup>Hummel, p. 102; Joachim Jeremias, "Adām," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated by Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1964), II, 141-143.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. however Paul Volz, Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter (Second edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1934), p. 360; and H. Wheeler Robinson, Religious Ideas of the Old Testament (Second edition; London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1956), p. 4; who speak of the idea of a Golden Age of the patriarchs also.

which were manifested in history. The Exodus was at all times the type of God's interventions; so it is not surprising that the felicity of Mosaic times should occupy more space in eschatology than truly paradisaic felicity. Yahweh will recall his people to the desert, . . . but, instead of being an exhausting march, it will be a triumphal procession; . . . The new political and social organization will be like that of the Exodus (Is. 1:26) and Yahweh will proceed to divide the land again. The vision of the new covenant in Jer. 31 is likewise a transposition on to the eschatological plane of one of the essential Mosaic themes.<sup>8</sup>

Volz states:

Die Erlösung aus Ägypten ist wiederholt als die erste Erlösung mit der zweiten, der Erlösung in der Endzeit, zusammengestellt, und die Zeit des Wüstenaufenthaltes unter Mose ist schon im Priesterkodex als Idealzeit, als Bild der Heilszeit gezeichnet . . . . Gott war damals mitten unter den Menschen sichtbar; in der Heilszeit wird die Herrlichkeit Gottes, wie einst in Moses Tagen, wiederum in der Wolke sichtbar werden.<sup>9</sup>

Volz continues:

Ferner waren die Kinder Israel damals frei von der Fremdherrschaft . . . ebenso hatte der Tod keine Gewalt über sie.<sup>10</sup>

The third area which it is commonly agreed affected the mode of Israel's expression of her future hopes was that of the Golden Age of David and Solomon. In order to appreciate the continuity of Jacob's presentation, we shall again note his words:

The hope of the return of Davidic times added to the paradise and Exodus themes an element which was prominent in view of the circumstances surrounding the composition of the Biblical books. A large number of hopes center around Jerusalem. . . . It is very probable that several reasons contributed to give Jerusalem this essential role: its sacred character since the Canaanite period, its geographical position and the memory of extraordinary deliverances in the course of history. Israel was conscious of owing all these valuable things of the past to David and, because

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<sup>8</sup>Jacob, p. 326.

<sup>9</sup>Volz, p. 360.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 326.



of the general tendency of Hebrew mentality to incarnate all truths in people, all the glory of Jerusalem came to be concentrated in the person of David.<sup>11</sup>

Frost is somewhat more extreme:

We are probably right in saying that the earliest expectation was pitched no higher than the state which a later age conceived David to have enjoyed: "And it came to pass, when the King dwelt in his house, and Yahweh gave him rest from all his enemies round about . . ." From the beginning, eschatology thus had two aspects--the peace of the future age, or the warfare by which it was to be accomplished.<sup>12</sup>

It is probably already evident on the basis of the preceding quotation--and it becomes even more so as one reads around in the vast materials written on the subject--that there remains a sizeable number of Israelite "pictures of hope" which are unaccounted for on the basis of this threefold division, or whose supposed connection with their original type is quite remote. One thinks, for example, of such a picture as a man sitting under his own vine and fig tree, or of the peace existing between men and animals. The division of the source of Israel's hopes into three parallel and independent streams is an oversimplification, although it is indeed a helpful one. This is shown, for example, by the fact that different scholars frequently derive the same picture from different sources.<sup>13</sup>

That this threefold division is an oversimplification is no doubt recognized by many. Nicklesburg states, for example, that the first

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<sup>11</sup>Jacob, pp. 326-327.

<sup>12</sup>Frost, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup>E.g., Max Weber, Ancient Judaism (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1952), p. 229, who traces man's peace with the animals back to the covenant idea; while Hummel, p. 102, traces it back to paradise.

exodus was already considered a return to paradise, as shown by such items as the description of Canaan as "a land flowing with milk and honey," and the removal of every kind of sickness; and that the second exodus too was considered a new creation.<sup>14</sup> Some see in the Davidic king too primarily a figure who would restore the goodness of creation.<sup>15</sup> The many proposed sources of the messianic king idea are well-known, for example, the Urmensch, the Adam-archetype, the Davidic idea, the sacral king idea, and the Persian Son of Man conceptions. In the face of such a bewildering mass of data and opinions, it is almost astounding that W. O. E. Oesterly can conclude after examining the Tehom myth, the Heilbringer myth, and the Paradise or Golden Age myths in both Israel and other cultures:

Whatever other consideration may have entered in and contributed towards the formation of the "Golden Age-" or "Paradise-" myth--and such there must certainly have been--the original and main cause seems to have been due to natural instinct.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, states Oesterly, the primary factor in choosing the pictures used to portray future bliss relates to a peoples view of wherein true happiness consists.

This seems to be the position of one of the older theologies:

This conception of the closing era determines the way in which it is depicted. We nowhere find prophecies of individual and

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<sup>14</sup>George W. E. Nicklesburg, Jr., "The Theological Background of the Marcan Account of the Baptism and Temptation of Jesus" (Unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, 1962), p. 23.

<sup>15</sup>Paul and Elizabeth Achtemeier, The Old Testament Roots of Our Faith (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 101.

<sup>16</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley, The Evolution of the Messianic Idea (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1908), p. 125.

future events. Everything is purely poetic and ideal. In contrast to the wants and woes of the actual world there is painted, on a ground of gold, the bright picture of an ideal world. All the glorious days of splendour which the past had known, and which prosperity saw with the halo that memory cast around them--all that imagination ever desired for the people of God as a recompense for the misery of the present--all this was formed into one bright picture, ever-changing and full of charm. Things which in the world of experience, are mutually exclusive, are put by the different prophets side by side. Every attention is given to depicting the essentials of an age of bliss, but none at all to detail.<sup>17</sup>

The same point is made by Heinisch from a different perspective:

These descriptions of the messianic era present no contradictions or utopian reveries if, instead of understanding them verbally, we properly evaluate them as picture illustrations. The prophets knew they were not giving objectively accurate descriptions of future conditions, as is shown by their constant endeavor to use new pictures and their refusal to employ the details of older images. . . . In these passages we must distinguish between the kernel and shell. . . . The decisive element is . . . the message which the prophet seeks to convey. . . . The difference in style in the various books prove they did not react passively to divine revelation but moulded, so to speak, their own personal forms with which they conveyed God's message. In presenting this message they acted independently of one another.<sup>18</sup>

We might conclude, then, that the pictures which Israel used to portray her future hopes are the pictures which set forth her conception--arrived at on the basis of her religious, political, and social history as she had experienced them and as they had been handed down to her in her own traditions and in the traditions of the culture of which she was a part--of what true happiness was, religiously, socially, culturally, and politically.

In conclusion, there is a further study which might well prove

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<sup>17</sup>Hermann Schultz, Old Testament Theology, translated by J. A. Paterson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1892), II, 365-366.

<sup>18</sup>Heinisch, p. 330.

fruitful in this area of the study of the sources of Israel's future hope. With the conception of the covenant apparently continuing to increase as the focal point of Old Testament studies, and with the fact obvious that many of Israel's hopes for the future coincide with the blessings pronounced upon those who keep the covenant in such passages as Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26, it should prove fruitful to study Israel's hopes more fully on the basis of her formulas of blessing and curse, and secondly, to study the origins of these formulas.<sup>19</sup> If they are a part of the international treaty form, as Mendenhall suggests,<sup>20</sup> it would seem that the idea of reflecting the common joys and disappointments of life would be substantially increased.

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<sup>19</sup>Delbert R. Hillers, Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964) has dealt with this subject only from the negative angle.

<sup>20</sup>George Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), passim.

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